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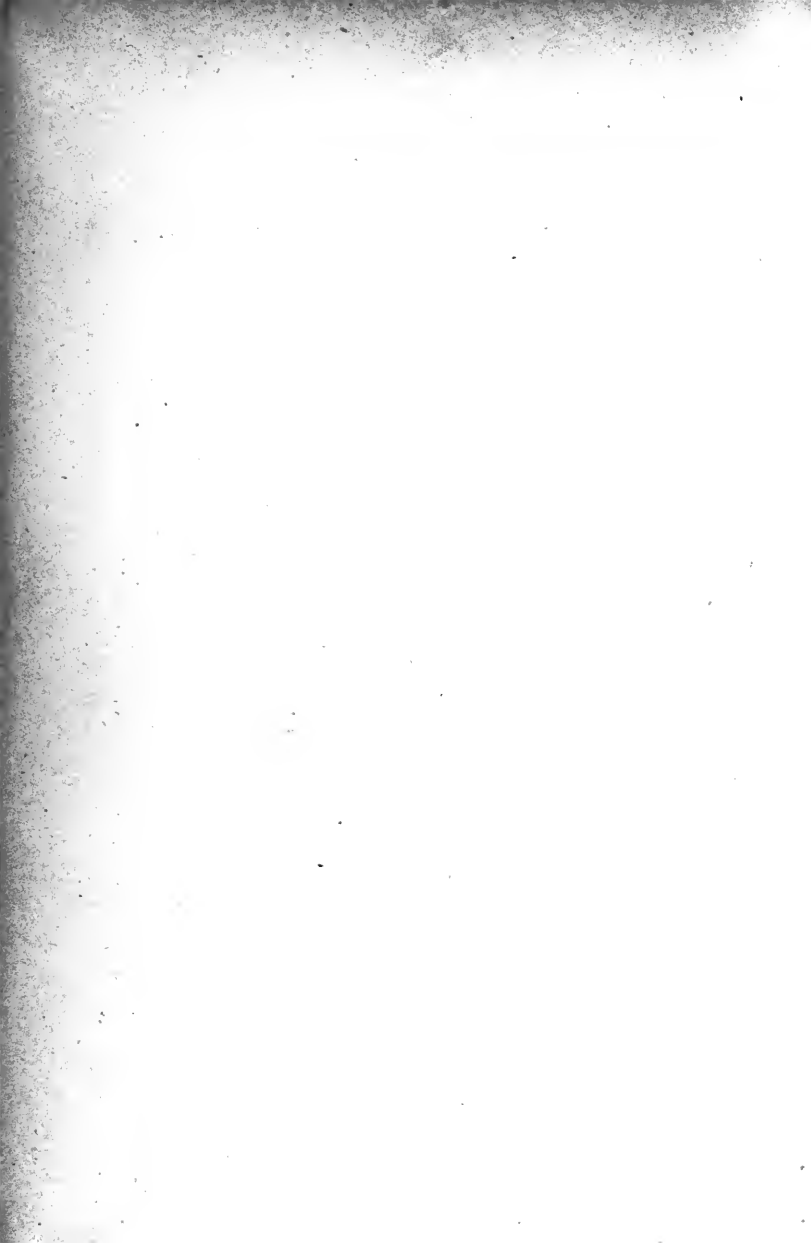
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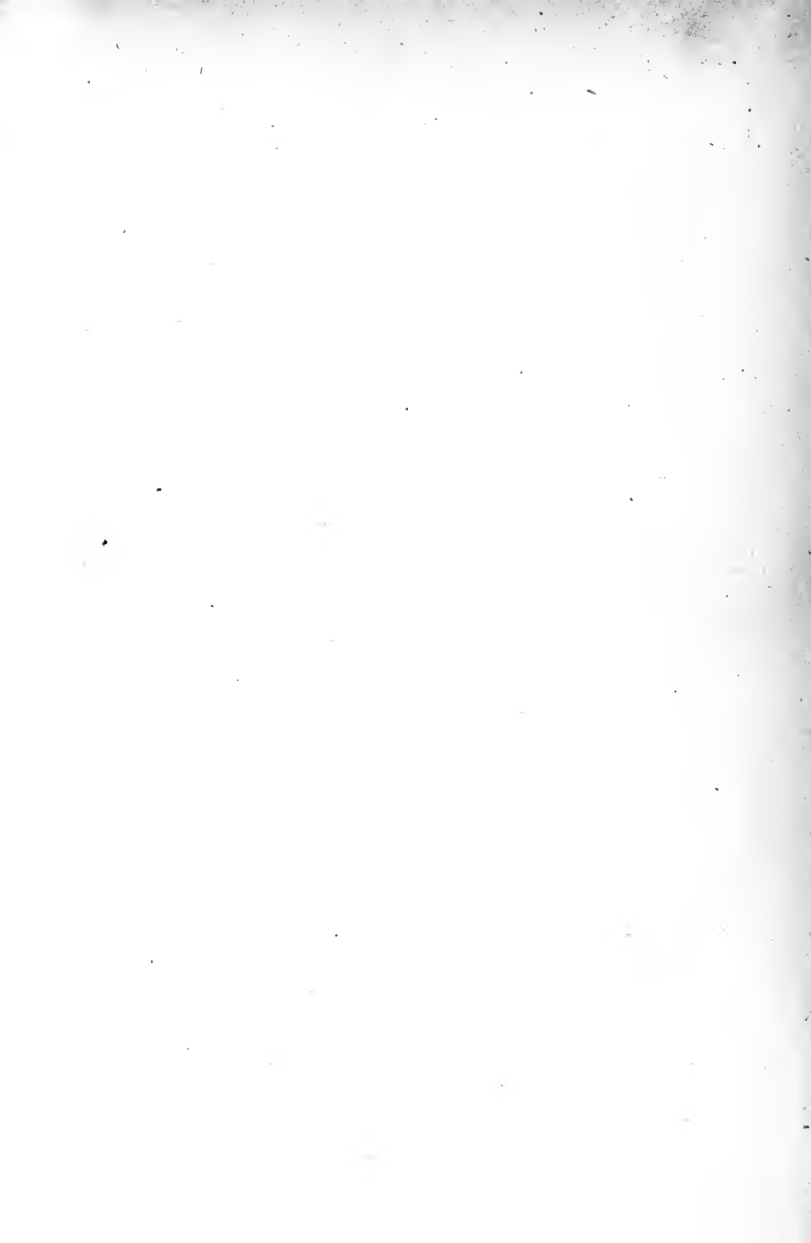


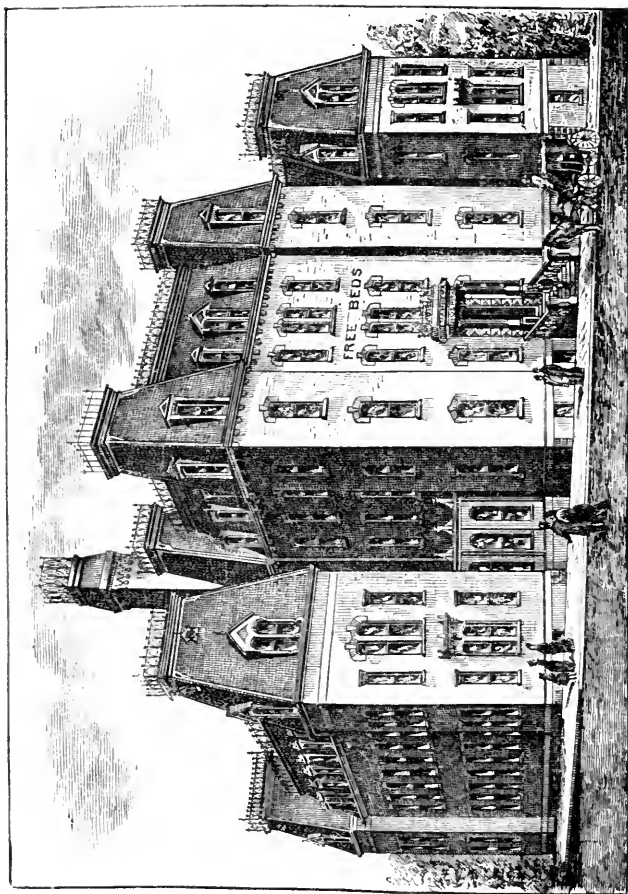
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THE
CHARITY "BOOM."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ME."

"FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY:
THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY."

FAIR EDITION.

PUBLISHED BY THE
HAHNEMANN HOSPITAL FREE BED FUND ASSOCIATION.

1880.

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Dedicated

TO

THE LADIES OF THE HAHNEMANN HOSPITAL

FREE BED FUND

FAIR ASSOCIATION.

EARNEST IN PURPOSE, UNTIRING IN EFFORT,

AND ABOUNDING IN KINDLY

MINISTRATIONS.

GOD AND THE SUFFERING BLESS THEM!

626008



THE
CHARITY "BOOM."

ON the door-step—in the white light of
the waning Christmas moon,
When the wind shrieked round the corners
and the fires burned low too soon,
When the pavement creaked the echo of
the passer's rapid tread,

Footfalls hastening to the welcome by
the cheerful fireside spread,
And great frosty tear-drops clustered
round the almost human eye
Of the o'erwrought beast of burden,
while in misty circles high
Rose the warm breath from each nostril,
wasting on the chill night air
E'en as life and heart are wasted by
the bleak breath of despair ;—
Crouched a frail form with a basket,
scarce a woman, more than child,
And with crusts from out my basement
strove to sate her hunger wild ;

While above the harsh wind's rattle I
 could catch her bitter moan,
As she pressed her freezing members
 'gainst the cold unfeeling stone.
And I watched her death-numbed features
 ghastly in the pale moon ray—
Ah! the cold creeps in so surely where
 gaunt Hunger leads the way!

But listen! the lips move: "Oh God!
 tell me why
Thy great loving heart is unmoved by
 my cry;

And why was I fashioned thine image
to bear,

And tossed on this rough world bereft
of thy care?

Great Father! *my* Father! for I am
thy child,

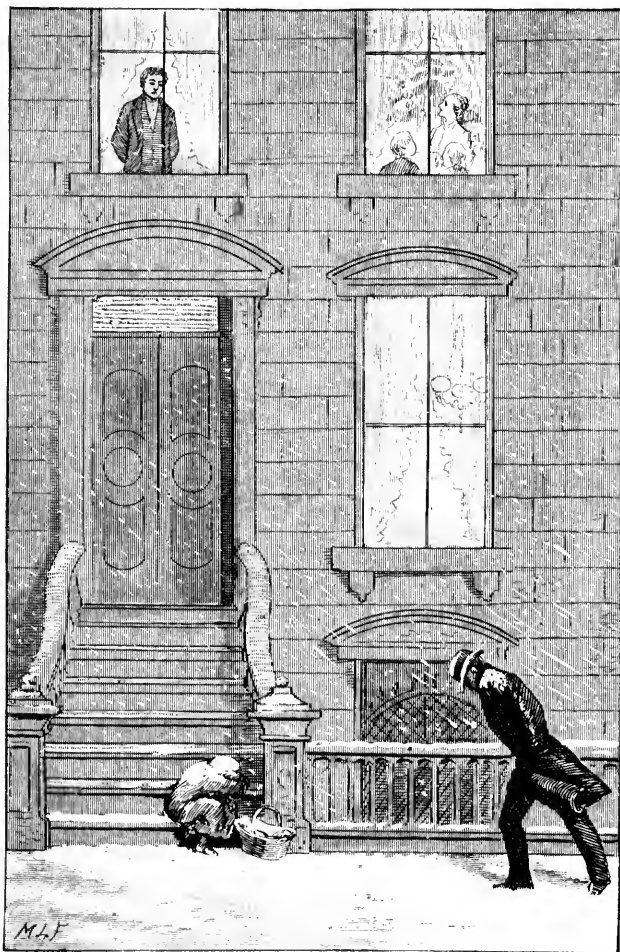
How canst thou be deaf to my anguish
so wild?

I'm starving, I'm friendless, despised and
forlorn,

All hope from this poor wretched bosom
is torn!

Can nothing arouse Thee? the last, the
last cry!





Great Father! Jehovah! *good Christ,*
let me die!"

Bright the coals gleamed on my hearthstone,
gaily waked the Christmas-cheer;
Soft eyes glistened in the gaslight, red
lips breathed in accents dear,
And I clasped my hands and muttered:
"Surely, hope, and faith are vain;
Heaven and very Hell are parted only
by a window-pane!

Is the God-heart less than human, is
Omnipotence a jest?

Do the faithful feed on falsehood and
is trust a myth at best?"

Then my fettered spirit shuddered at the
thoughts within me bred,

As I dared the impious question, stand-
ing with averted head.

That night in a vision an angel came,
And stood by my bedside and breathed
my name.

Her folded wings on her shoulders were
crossed,

And the floating locks from her forehead
tossed ;

Her features were lit by a heavenly
grace,

But my blood grew chill—'twas the out-
cast's face !

And I shrank with a mortal's dread
amaze

From the piercing search of a spirit's
gaze.

O marvel of living, O mystery of Death,
Immortality born of Life's wasted breath !

"I am come with a message," she
sweetly said,

"From Him whom ye impiously dared to
upbraid ;

From the Father in Heaven, that Holiest One
Before whom your prayers and reproaches
have come.

" 'Remember the poor,'—'twas your bur-
den each day

As round the home altar ye gathered to
pray ;

'Remember the poor,' and like incense
most sweet

Your petition went up to the dear
mercy-seat ;

'Remember the poor,' and the Great
Giver smiled

To answer the thought of His suppliant
child,

And made you his steward commissioned
to bear

The proofs of his love to the children
of Care.

" '*Remember the poor*, and He gave you
gold ;

'Remember the poor,' 'twas increased ten-
fold ;

'Remember the poor,' and He blessed
your store,

With his choicest gifts it was teeming
o'er ;

'Remember the poor,' and the Heavens
bent low

To the heart that was touched by an-
other's woe.

"Now in silver, merchandise, gold and
stocks,

In bonds, notes and liens under ponderous locks,

You're hoarding the treasures and still
you pray,

'Gracious Father, remember the poor
this day!'

Oh, easy of *conscience*, prospered Christian,
take care

Lest you hide in your pocket God's answer
to prayer!

In a basement hard by, a mother to-
night

Is watching and praying and stretching
her sight,

As the shadowy figures flit to and fro
On the sidewalk that edges her window low.
But she listens in vain for the well-known
tread,

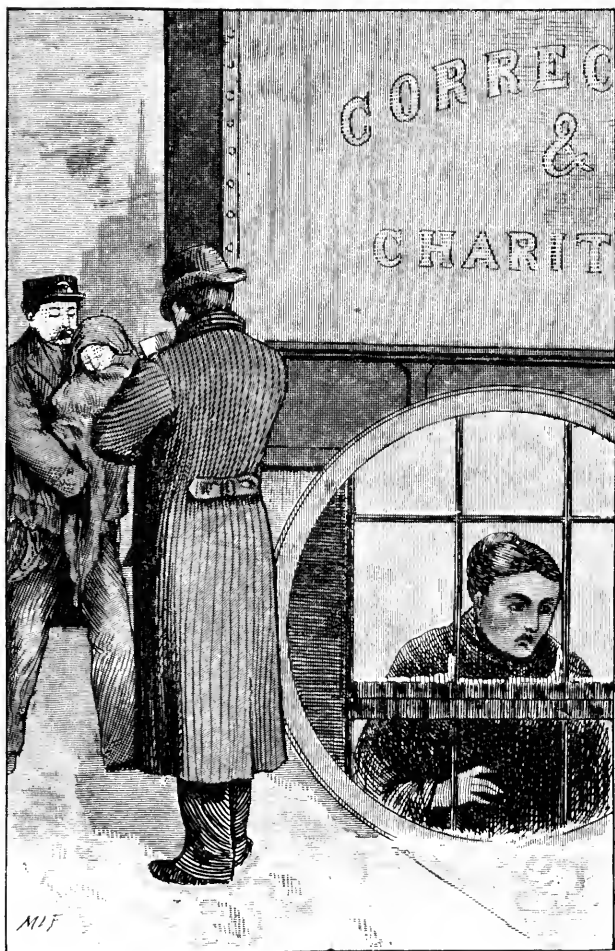
Of the delicate girl who went out for
bread.

On the hearth-stone the ashes lie cold
and gray,

The light in its socket has flickered
away,

And the cold creeps under the coverlet
thin :





Nature struggles with death—but, *whose*
is the sin?

And greedy reporters jot down for the
press :

"Unclaimed at the Morgue—Verdict—
Case of distress."

Past the rifted cloud and far into the
blue

I earnestly gazed as the angel passed
through.

She shaded my eyes with her kindly
spread wing
From the unrevealed glory of Heaven's
Great King,
And showed me the treasures laid up
for me where
The Saviour my mansion had gone to
prepare ;
Some spiritless ghosts of benevolent
deeds,
Upon which a chronic self-righteousness
feeds,
Some petty subscriptions, some clothes
out of date,

Some coins dropped in church on the
good deacon's plate,

Some soul-uttered vows, an occasional
prayer

Wrung out by temptation, by sorrow or
care,

A few loves unselfish, some aims stripped
of pride,

Accepted because of the Jesus who
died,

And above them all to my horrified
sight,

The crust that was left on my door-step
that night!

Now I care not what quibbling parsons
may say

Of a genuine Hell in the good old way,
A most exquisite hell for me it would be,
That crust e'en in Heaven to eternally
see.

Ah! the finance of Heaven is not brok-
erage bold,
Where men deal upon margins and buy
without gold,
And upon see-saws live, down or up as
it may,

And the gains of a lifetime are lost in
a day.

There the dollar is dollar, a dime is a
dime,

Payments given at sight and in no case
on time;

With the oddest results it cannot be de-
nied,

For whether you multiply, add or di-
vide,

You will only find—figure it up as you
may—

That passed to your credit you've given
away.

*"The yearly reports then that publish
my name*

*With laudable numbers attached to the
same,*

*My gen'rous subscriptions, my offerings,
and then——?"*

They had their reward—they were seen
here of men,

And the angels on duty vouchsafe to
record.

Only charities done in the name of the
Lord.

We have prated of Charity loudly and
long,

Have harangued the public with lecture
and song,

We have opened our hearts to its clam-
orous call,

And done our whole duty at banquet
and ball;

We have garnered our thousands with
Tableaux and Fair,

And builded our hospitals high in the
air,

We have frescoed their walls and have
polished their floors,

Have widened their halls and embellished
their doors ;

Great beautiful structures commanding and
bold,

But strongly secured with a fastening of
gold,

Which mocks at the penniless mendicant's cry,

And stifles his plea with an "if" or a
"why ;"

While free circulation, ten times in a
score,

Is checked by red tape if one gets
through the door.

A minute too old or a fortnight too
young ;

The wound of the lip should be one
of the tongue ;

The hump is of muscle, it should be
of bone ;

The cough has a nasal, not bronchial
tone ;

Acute inflammation affected the larynx,
This hospital treats only ills of the
pharynx ;

'Tis a carpal instead of a tarsal strain ;

'Tis a ruptured nerve not a varicose
vein ;

That the adipose touches the heart may
be seen,

Unfortunate creature, we doctor the
spleen.

The left limb is fractured instead of the
right ;

You suffer at evening, we treat in day-
light.

The lid of your eye, 'twere better the
ball ;

The liver at fault, we attend to the
gall.

'Tis the upper instead of the lower
face;

An ulna instead of a radius case.

We cancerous affections a specialty
make,

This inclines a polypous nature to
take,—

Till symptoms are made a distinction so
fine

That a vertebra fails to suggest the spine.

And hence the close sieve of a medical
view

Not one in a hundred poor creatures
get through;

And like good resolutions, a pitiful
horde,

These are laid by at last on a Hospi-
tal Board.

And so the great mass of the suffering
poor

Only find under ground an infallible
cure.

Or if to cold sect regulations take
heed,

There is nothing so harsh as an unfeel-
ing creed,

And this rigidly strict diagnostical sight
Is eclipsed by an orthodox stringency quite.
The holiest intentions, unfolding, are
 chilled
By "doctrinal points" into just souls
 instilled;
And the poles of the magnet most faith-
 fully tell
How sectarian tenets good Christians
 repel;
Baptist, Methodist, Quaker, High Church,
 and a score,
Each honestly shouting "This way is 'THE
 DOOR!'"

Till *the faith* is become an indefinite
word,

Dependent alone on the *place* where 'tis
heard.

And though not in letter, in spirit 'tis
true,

The food of the Gentile won't nourish
the Jew,

Pray, into the Protestant Mission or
"Home"

How shall the unsanctified Catholic
come,

While the Sisters of Mercy slight mercy
can feel

For the heretic sufferer's woe or his
weal.

So we writhe and we suffer, and perish
and die,

By the line and the plummet of Bigot-
ry's eye.

More—churches are mortgaged and mis-
sions in debt,

Their current expenses reluctantly met,

While boards of trustees armed with by-
law and rule,

The zeal of the ardent effectually cool.

In the temple of Faith with its far-
reaching spire,

Its silver-toned organ and matchless-
voiced choir,

Its carpeted aisles and cushion-lined
pews,

Its gorgeous stained windows with soft
blending hues,

Its velvet-laid altars with trappings of
gold

Where rich-surpliced teachers God's les-
sons unfold,

Ye mourn in your broadcloth, your vel-
vet, your lace,

The *lien*-ness which shadows the holiest
place,

Since the Great God looks down and
discerns in the gloom

An incumbrance too great for just
Heaven to assume,

And while at the chancel your vows
you record,

The beggar outside may be nearest the
Lord.

But some men are wiser than most men
believe,

And for their short-comings find glorious
retrieve

In the full consecration to Jesus they
make,

Of what through the grave they are pow-
erless to take ;

So magnanimous selfishness ceases to
breathe,

Consoled by a generous—"I give and
bequeathe—"

Thus fervently hoping God's plans to
o'ermatch

And forward their treasures by Special
Dispatch ;

Or chooses a proud *in memoriam* to
build

Of granite or marble to charity willed,
Which Administrator or Judge perchance
may

Decide is *no charity* since it *won't*
pay,

And the good Book has made it exceed-
ingly plain,

Bread cast on the waters is gathered
again.

And in that grand spasm philanthropy
feels

Producing convulsions of lancers and
reels,

When the great hearts of beauty and
opulence break

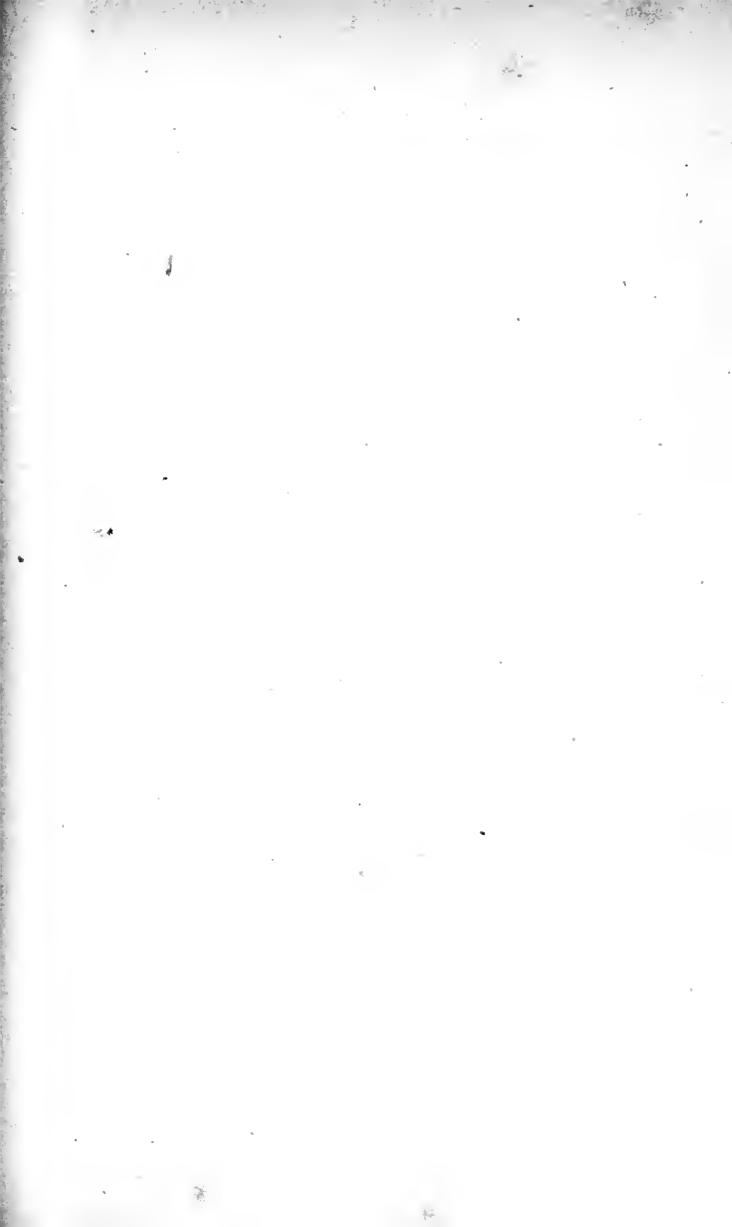
And pour themselves out for sweet
Charity's sake,

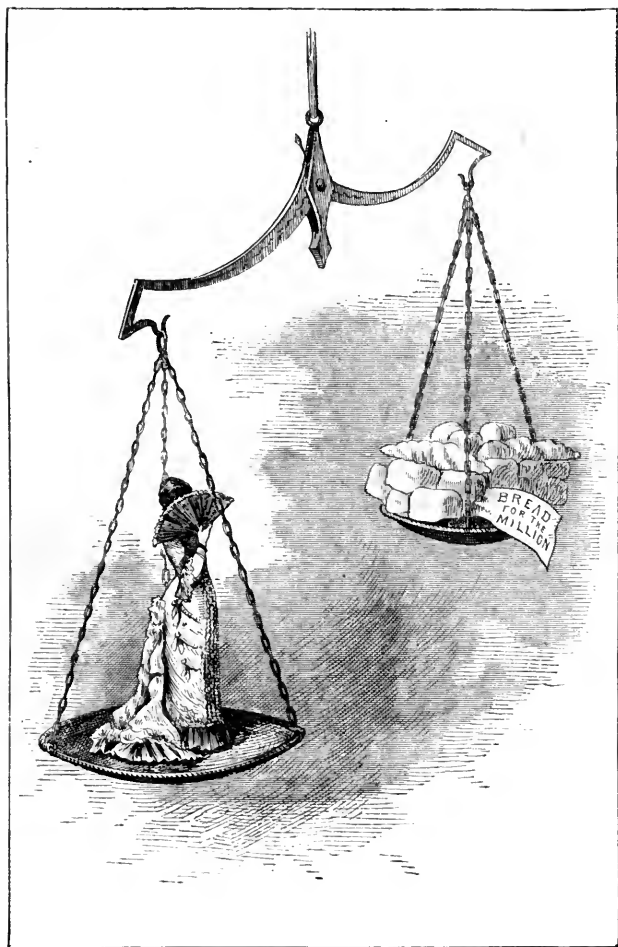
When tailor and modiste and coiffeur
combine

Their arts till the human is almost di-
vine,

And arrayed *comme il faut*, of one beau-
tiful belle

The value in figures is wondrous to
tell,





And into the scale of just estimates thrown
Her fair market status will quickly be
shown ;

Not the lady herself—'twould be greatly
unfair

With plain creature comforts her charms
to compare—

But the outfit complete of one genuine belle,
When rated at par, let the honest weights
tell.

The round *tout ensemble* an Avenue
store—

Real Estate at an ebb—would provide, if
not more.

The jewel confining her rich golden
braid

Would purchase a butcher's entire stock
in trade.

The quivering pendant just over her
heart

Would set up the very best stand in the
mart,

Green grocer or baker, or name what you
will,

The weak to refresh or the hungry to
fill.

While just one short yard of her elegant
lace

Would get up a dinner deserving a
grace.

The dainty trimmed slippers encasing her
feet,

At Baldwin's would furnish a pauper com-
plete.

The glittering solitaire adorning her
ear,

Would pay for a modern-built flat a full
year ;

While necklace and mouchoir, and lastly
the loves

Of bangles and bracelets and ten-button
gloves,

Would light up a home lost in darkness
before,

And keep the grim wolf from full many
a door.

And now to this outlay, most generous
be sure,

A ten dollar ticket we add for the
poor ;

But with ushers, bill-posters, *et caeteras*
and gas,

This amount is reduced to a pittance,
 alas !

And though the small hours with the
 revel be filled,

The thousands go empty away from the
 Guild ;

And by this grand farce 'tis most cleverly
 shown

How both ends of charity center at
 home.

Now into the scales toss your purses and
 needs,

Then toss in your duties and toss in your
deeds,

Next toss in your faith and against it
your cares,

And toss in your good works and lastly
your prayers ;

How curious to notice the odds at the
ends,

So much on the turn of a pivot de-
pends.

O ladies ! sweet ladies ! kind ladies and
true !

Think just for a moment how much you
can do.

Would ye light up another face sweet as
your own.

And kindle a heart to the joy ye have
known ;

Would ye shield from the rude gaze a
fair faultless form,

And shelter a soul from the world's cruel
scorn ?

Unglove your soft hands, there are tears
to be dried,

And pillows to smooth whereon loved
ones have died ;

And sweet little mouths turning up to be
fed,

And child hearts that flutter and watch
for your tread.

Oh be of one sad home the angel, the
light!

Your name its sweet watchword at morn
and at night.

The spirit on earth of **Our Father in
Heaven,**

Let **His** name be hallowed for joy you
have given;

And by your kind deeds make **His** kingdom
to come,

So best ON this earth shall **His** sweet
will be done.

O be of its table the fresh daily bread,
And over the erring your sweet pardon
shed,

And guard from temptation where want
is the snare,

And rescue from evil some frail child of
care ;

And so BE **His** power and **His** great glory
shown.

Forever and ever by one of His own.

Amen, and then dance in your heartiest
way,

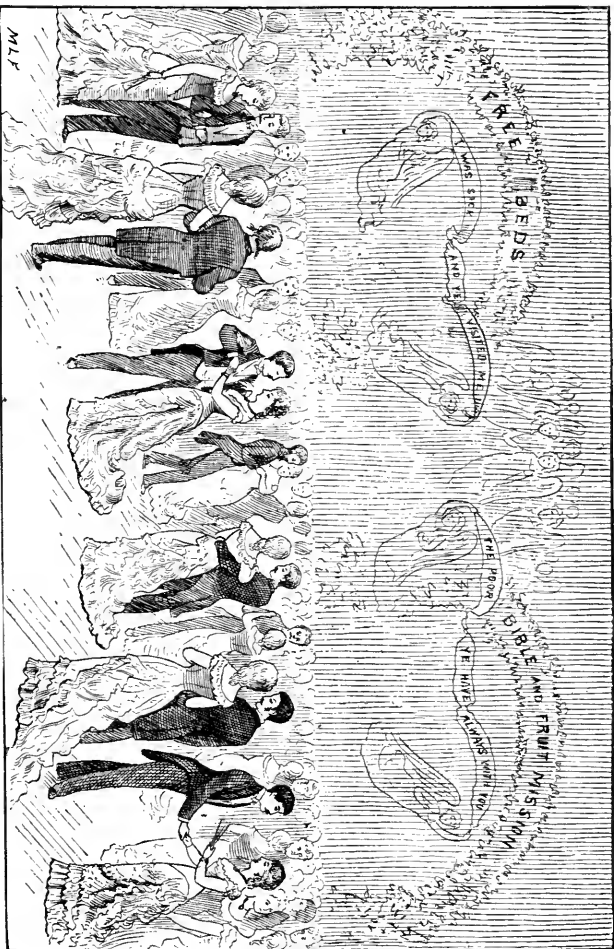
For a time is to dance as a time is to
pray ;

And 'twill not be surprising, if heeding
your call,

The angels come down to the Charity
Ball.

But the great Metropolitan spirit is
kind,

Though like pictured Justice the oftenest
blind,



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And her holiest thoughts and worthiest
aims
Are hampered and clogged by invisible
claims
Of pathies and schisms, of parties and
power,
Which the rude wheel of Fortune reverses
each hour.
So she gathers them up, the sick and
the poor,
The lame and the weary, the mad and
the sore,
The vile and the hungry, the pauper, the
thief,

The children of vice, and the victims of
grief ;

So vileness and purity every day ride,
In "corrections and charities" thrown side
by side ;

And kindly removed from the great city's
din,

The cess-pool of misery she huddles them
in.

O missions of kind words, of fruits and
of flowers,

Ye were born of a breath from elysian
bowers.

O sweet loving faces, O delicate tones,
Rich echoes are ye from the heavenly
zones.

O children of mercy, your beautiful hands
Are filling life's hour-glass with glittering
sands,

Whose luminous atoms are catching the
rays

Of beautiful sunlight to measure the
days.

The Heart's-ease that fades on yon suf-
ferer's breast

Is blooming for you in the Land of the
Blest ;
And the whisper of Jesus you breathed
in his ear,
Is the song he shall sing in that holier
sphere.

We travel life's roadway and little we
heed
The God-given power of each thought,
word and deed,
The weight of a smile or the charm of a
tear,

The thrill of a whisper, the chill of a
fear,

The tease of a glance, the check of a
sigh,

The stab of a jest, and the hurt of an
eye.

By the roadway, just there, is a daughter
of shame,

A scar on her conscience, a blot on her
name ;

We loathing, with horror instinctively
shrink

From lifting her fainting for only a
drink;

But the great heart of Jesus is moved
by her plea:

"*I* do not condemn"—Are we purer
than He?

A father, a thief, hotly pressed by the
law,

All eager her meshes about him to
draw;

No plea for his crime save the echoes
which come

From the famishing group in his desolate home.

But his free thoughts reach out to the glad hopes that cling

Round the great Judgment day of an omniscient King,

That rarest, that richest, that happiest of days

To the honest with God in his heart and his ways.

A neighbor, a friend in the days that have been,

With heart just as loyal, as earnest as
then,

A bankrupt—what more? Ah, the story
is old:

Love, friendship and faith even, perish
with gold.

A child heart is skipping along in the
way,

Unconsciously sporting with shadows that
play

Now lengthening, now parting, now
melting in one

As summery cloudlets coquette with the
sun ;

A waif on the wide world dropped
down at your feet—

Oh, the prayer for the fatherless kneel
and repeat,

And linger a moment, perchance ye may see
Whom the Father will send its *protector*
to be.

A foot snare—take heed!—in the treach-
erous sand,

"I am blind, is there any will give me
a hand!"

I am blind—pity, Lord! only dead eyes
can know

How dark is the road the poor sight-
less must go.

Oh, the struggle with poverty, sorrow,
and sin,

Is a struggle in which but the bravest
may win,

Though the faint heart must strive and
the faltering go

Where the battle is hottest and fiercest
the foe.

O ye stalwart of arm and unflinching
of nerve,

Truest heroes are made of the stout
hearts *that serve*.

Pale and dim is the banner protected by
might,

To the *rent* and the *crimson* brought in
from the fight.

The web of God's dealing is wond-
rously spun

With chequers and tracery, shadow and
sun,

And flecked with the atoms of man's
 changeful life,
Which speckle the fabric with turmoil
 and strife;
While spinning and weaving the hum
 of the mill
And buzz of the spindle may never be
 still,
For the warp is set taut and the woof
 of each day
Is filling the shuttle, whose unceasing
 play
Waits neither for tangle, for joy, nor
 for fret,

For prodigal thought nor for useless regret.

But the texture is perfect, come sunshine, come gloom,

With man at the spindle and Christ at the loom.

Oh, pour out your love as God pours out the showers,

And scatter your smiles as He scatters the flowers ;

Be the warm breath of truth like their fragrance distilled,

Till the darkest heart-corners with joy
shall be filled;
And sprinkle with good deeds life's
wearisome way,
And pray while you live, and then live
as you pray!





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